

THE ALAND QUESTION

FROM A SWEDISH FINLANDER'S
POINT OF VIEW

BY

J. J. SEDERHOLM



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THE ÅLAND QUESTION FROM A SWEDISH FINLANDER'S POINT OF VIEW.

By J. J. SEDERHOLM.

The Åland question has been discussed in numerous newspaper articles, pamphlets etc. published the whole world over. Much of this discussion, however, has been based on information which is very one-sided and often erroneous. We may therefore be permitted to give here a summary of such evidence as may be brought forward in favour of the Finnish, and especially a Swedish Finlander's point of view.

The Geographical Position of the Åland Islands.

1921 Pub

If we glance at a small scale map — e. g. Fig. 1 which is a reduced facsimile of a sketch-map contained in a semi-official pamphlet setting forth the Swedish point of view — we gain the impression that Åland is an island lying near the coast of Sweden, and separated from Finland by a much wider stretch of open sea, strewn with a few smaller islands. A more detailed map, however, conveys quite a different impression. If we observe Fig. 2 which is a reduced reproduction of a map prepared on the scale of 1/400,000, we see that the Åland Islands form only a small part of an extensive archipelago (in Swedish, Skärgård), stretching westwards from the coast of Finland to the Åland Sea, and comprising a very considerable number of islands which vary in size and in many cases are separated from each other by very narrow channels. Moreover, even this map shows only a comparatively small number of the islands. In the whole archipelago there are more than 10,000 islands. About 4,000 of these belong to the Skärgård of Åland; the remaining 6,000 belong to the Skärgård of Åbo. If the

smallest rocks visible on the charts are excluded, the number of islands in the whole archipelago is computed at 5,000, of which 2,880 belong to the Skärgård of Åbo.

The boundaries of these two sections of the archipelago follow a kind of passage (called "Skiftet") where the islands are less dense and give way here and there to areas of more or less open sea (known as „Fjärdar"). These Fjärdar however are by no means well marked. They also occur within the Skärgårds of Åbo and Åland, dividing them off into still smaller sections.

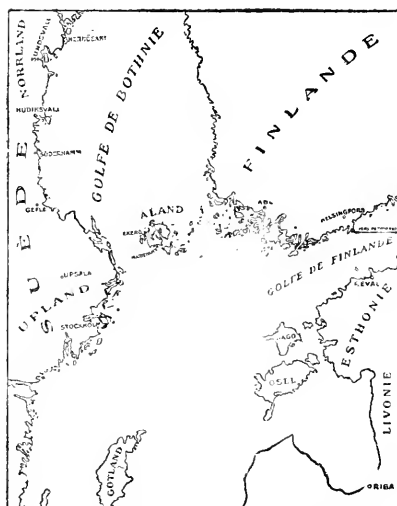


Fig. 1. Facsimile (1:2) of a Map of Åland reproduced in the pamphlet of M. Erik Sjöestedt, „La Question des Îles d'Åland".

The whole of the archipelago — from the geographical point of view one of the most peculiar and interesting regions of the world — lies on a submarine shelf which extends from the Finnish mainland to the Åland Sea, at a depth that rarely exceeds 40 metres or 22 fathoms (cf. Fig. 3). There are certain fjord-like depressions in this shelf. These, how-

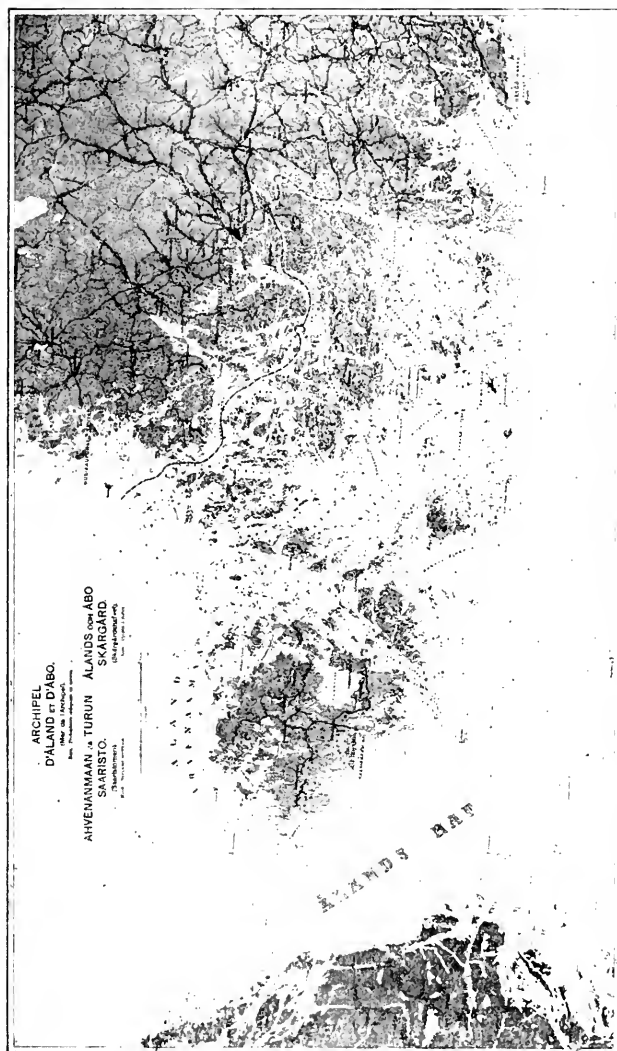


Fig. 2. Map of the archipelago of Åland and Åbo, reduced from maps prepared on the scale of 1:400,000. The boundary of the populations speaking the Swedish and Finnish languages is indicated by a dotted line.

ever, do not follow the boundary between the Åland and the Åbo Skärgårds, but intersect the former. On the other hand, the Åland Sea, which separates this submarine shelf from the Swedish coast, reaches the comparatively great depth of 301 metres, and has no islands. It is ice-free during most of the winter, while the Skärgård Sea (as the hydrographers call it) is frozen during the greater part of the winter (cf. Fig. 4).

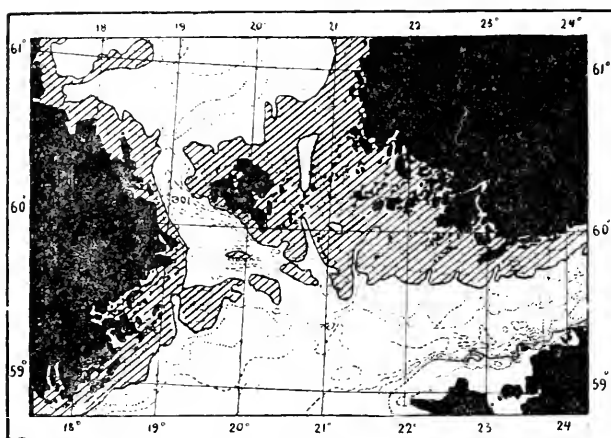


Fig. 3. Depth of the Baltic Sea round Åland. The shaded area represents depths not exceeding 40 metres (22 fathoms). The maximum depth (301 metres) occurs in the narrowest part of the Åland Sea.

Ethnography of the Åland Islands and the Adjacent Parts of Finland.

From time immemorial the Åland Islands have been inhabited by a people of pure Swedish blood. The Finnish immigrants form only an inconsiderable portion of the population, which numbers about 25,000 (of whom 20,171 registered at the census of Dec. 31st, 1910). Much stress is laid on these facts in Swedish propaganda, which usually omits to mention that the same statement is also true as regards the adjacent parts of the Åbo archipelago, as well as a great

portion of the coastal region of the Finnish mainland. A glance at the map reproduced in Fig. 2, where the boundary of the territory inhabited by a Swedish-speaking population is indicated by a dotted line, shows that this population stretches in a broad zone through the southern part of the Åbo Skärgård whence it extends further into the Province of Nyland (cf. Fig. 5 on p. ~~38~~40)

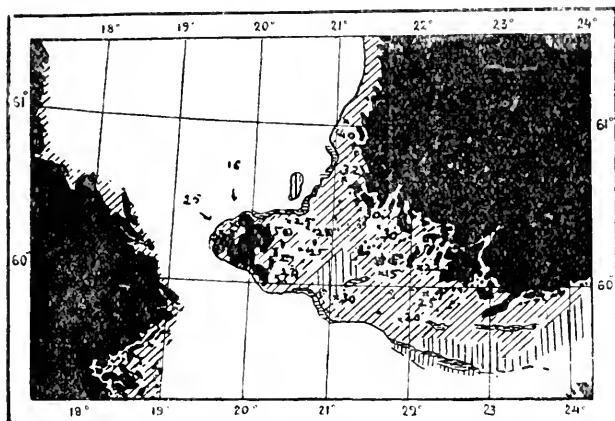


Fig. 4. Ice-conditions in the Skärgård Sea at the end of January 1920, according to a map prepared by the Hydrographical Department of Finland. The figures represent the thickness of the ice (in centimetres). Inclined lines denote unbroken ice; vertical lines denote broken ice which has frozen over again; horizontal lines denote pack-ice.

In their official report, the Swedish delegates to the Peace Conference made very incorrect statements in connection with these facts. We will give here a translation of their version.

"Up to the present day Åland has succeeded in retaining its character of a purely Swedish province, as regards the composition of its population. *The boundary in this respect follows the waters of the Skiftet*¹⁾. In fact the four Åland

¹⁾ La Question des Îles d'Åland. Quelques données présentées à la Conférence de la Paix, par les délégués de la Suède, pp. 5 and 6. — The italics are ours.

parishes which border on these waters have a population of only 25 Finns as against 3,284 Swedes (i. e. 0.8 per cent) while in the Finnish parishes which border on the eastern side of these same waters — with the exception of the small and isolated parish of Iniö — the proportion between the Swedish and Finnish elements is practically reversed."

The latest statistical publications give the following figures for the parishes east of the Skiftet: —

	Swedish-speaking	Finnish-speaking	% of Swedes
Korpo	2,315	224	91.00
Houtskär	1,852	76	96.60
Iniö	708	97	88.00
Kivimaa	64	2,196	2.80

Thus the Finnish population predominates only in Kivimaa, at the extreme north end of the Skiftet. Elsewhere Swedes — speaking quite the same dialect as the Alanders, although with a slightly different accent, — form the major portion of the population on the eastern side also. On the Aland Islands, taken as a whole, the percentage of Swedes is 95.60; in the parish of Saltvik, on Eastern Aland, it is 90.17, which is less than in Korpo and in Houtskär. All these figures are taken from the census of Dec. 31st, 1910.

The statistics given by the Swedish delegates are correct, both as regards the population west of the Skiftet, and as regards the distribution of the Finnish and Swedish population near Abo — which shows that they have had access to such statistical data as are available. What therefore is the explanation of their false statement?

In the 40 parishes which are situated in the Skärgårds of Abo and Aland, the Swedish population numbers 47,150, while the Finnish population amounts to 29,392. In the whole Province of Abo (including Aland), at the census of 1910, there were 63,503 Swedes, of whom the Alanders formed less than a third part.

As we have shown, the creation of a political boundary drawn along the Skiftet would cut into two parts a Swedish population which extends throughout the whole district.

Moreover, the language boundary in the province of Åbo is by no means an anthropological boundary. The semi-official Swedish pamphlet "*La Question des Îles d'Åland*" by M. Erik Sjoestedt (Paris 1919) describes the Ålanders and the Western Finns as if they showed racially the most marked contrasts. There is something in his description which reminds one of the ideas of Gobineau or Chamberlain: — On the one side there are fair blue-eyed Germanic people, on the other side a dark and short race — masters and serfs, according to the ideas of these two writers. Let us now listen to M. Sjoestedt: "The population of Åland is tall, slender, fair; it has no ethnographical relationship with the Finns who, as is well known, are of Mongolian blood, small, dark, broad-set and pug-nosed, forming — like the Magyars and the Bulgarians — a branch of the Tatar (!) race."

As a matter of fact, the average height of the Ålanders is 1.700 metres, and that of the Western Finlanders of Swedish origin is 1.694 metres. On the other hand, the tallest Swedes — those of Gottland — measure 1.720 on the average. The Swedes of Nyland measure 1.683, and those of Ostrobothnia 1.680 metres on the average; while the Finns of South-Western Finland measure 1.685 and 1.686 respectively, — thus, more than the Swedes last mentioned. Elsewhere the Finns measure from 1.644 to 1.680 metres, which is much above the middle height in Europe. As a whole they have light coloured hair and blue eyes¹. Many of them have features which are less regular than those of the Swedes, but to call them Mongols is about as correct as if we were to speak of the olive-complexioned population of southern Italy as Negroes.

The anthropological investigations of Dr. Westerlund show that there is a strong admixture of Scandinavian

¹) Atlas de Finlande, 1910, Texte II, pp. 54—64.

blood in the Finnish population of South-Western Finland also. In the coast regions the blood is almost purely Scandinavian. In many cases no one would be able to distinguish Finns from Swedes of the purest blood, without hearing them speak. It may be added that there is one parish in the Alands (Koekar), which is inhabited by a population of dark complexion.

In America the Finns are often called Scandinavians. Professor Ripley, in his great anthropological handbook, refers Scandinavians and Finns alike to the same "Nordic" race. Although there are no doubt marked racial differences between the most typical representatives of Swedes and Finns, the gross exaggeration in M. Sjoestedt's account of these differences is obvious.

It is difficult to determine with exactitude from what quarter the Swedish population arrived in Southern Finland and in the Alands. It is certain, however, that it lived there already in the Stone Age, and that it once had a much wider extension from the linguistic point of view. The oldest names along the coast of the Gulf of Finland, and around the entrance to it, are Swedish, from Wiborg and Styrsudd, in the East, to Domesnäs, in the Riga Bay, in the West: but many migrations have changed the relations between the various nationalities, especially after periods of war or famine.

As to the dialects of Aland the *Nordisk Familjebok*¹⁾ (the great Swedish encyclopaedia, published in Stockholm) contains the following statement:

„The dialects of Aland, as might be presumed from the geographical situation of the province, show certain similarities with the language spoken in Sweden, especially the dialect of Roslagen The Aland dialect, however, must no doubt be reckoned as a Finnish dialect The Aland dialect seems to share with the other Swedish dialects of Finland its stock of such words as are not to be

¹⁾ Volume XVIII, 1894, pp. 408—409.

found in the language spoken in Sweden. In general, the vernacular of Åland most closely resembles the Western Finlandish (and Ostrobothnian) dialects The dialect spoken in the eastern Skärgård of Åland and in Koeckar has the "l" and "n" *monillés* in common with the dialect of Naerpes in Ostrobothnia; these sounds are of very ancient origin."

*Geographical and Strategical Impossibility of the Proposed
New Frontier between Finland and Sweden.*

We have shown that a state-boundary following the Skiftet, so far from having an ethnographical justification, would result in dividing a homogeneous population into two opposite camps. As a customs-boundary it is still more impossible; the closest supervision on the part of the authorities would not suffice to prevent the smuggling of alcoholic drinks, tobacco etc. in that labyrinth-like archipelago, especially during the dark autumn nights and in winter time. If the Skiftet were to be made the customs-boundary, the whole of the population on both sides — speaking the same language, having the same traditions and habits, and knowing every little inlet — would become a race of contrabandists, and the demoralising influence of that trade would make itself felt all over the Ålands.

Communications within the whole of the Åbo—Åland Skärgård would suffer heavily if a Finnish-Swedish frontier were to be drawn through the Skiftet; since the smaller steamers from Åbo, which now serve the traffic on both sides of that passage, would no longer be able to extend their course to the Åland side of it. On the other hand, the sea-going vessels which traverse the Åland Sea are necessarily of a considerably larger type, and it would not pay them to include in their routes the easternmost parishes west of the Skiftet; nor would it be practicable to arrange a special service of smaller steamers for these parishes, since the traffic is too small. The result, therefore, would be that those islands which lie immediately west — and probably also

those which lie immediately east — of the Skiftet, would be in a large measure cut off from steamer traffic. The new boundary would also be very disadvantageous to fishermen, as they are accustomed to ply their trades in the waters on both sides of Åland, irrespectively of their domiciles.

From the strategic point of view, if Sweden were to control the Ålands, the Gulf of Bothnia would be converted into a *mare clausum*, since the deep sea connecting it with the Baltic, as well as the deeper sounds through the Skärgård, would be in Swedish hands. When speaking of the strategic importance of the Ålands to Sweden, the Swedes always forget that the Islands are of still greater strategic importance to Finland, which may easily be attacked from that quarter by an enemy possessing a fleet. Indeed, the Finnish position is much more precarious and uncertain than that of Sweden which — thanks to its semi-insular position and to the caution of its rulers — has enjoyed a longer peace than any other country of the world.

Historical Data concerning Åland. The Administrative Position of the Islands under the Swedish Domination.

Swedish writers have taken the greatest possible pains to prove that the Åland Islands did not belong to the administrative area of Finland during the Swedish régime; but the amount and character of the evidence which we can bring forward against their contention is so overwhelming that only a few facts need be mentioned here. If we consider those Swedish pamphlets which treat the matter in a fair and scholarly manner, we shall find the following points established beyond all possibility of dispute: — Ecclesiastically, the Åland Islands, since the beginning of the 14th. century, and probably much earlier, have formed a part of the Diocese of Åbo; judicially the Ålands have been connected with Finland since 1435; moreover, after passing through many vicissitudes during the Feudal Age, the Ålands have remained — in the most definite manner — administratively united with the Province of Åbo since 1634.

Swedish writers however try to show that the position of the Alands has not been quite identical with that of other counties of Finland. They mention the most trivial differences in this connection. They quote every instance when the term "Aland" has been used side by side with the term "Finland" etc. As a matter of fact smaller administrative differences between the various counties were common at an early stage of administrative development, and the names of the provinces (*landskap*) or counties (*härad*) were often used somewhat indiscriminately. Thus the name "Finland" was originally applied mainly to the region round Åbo — or what is now called Finland Proper, — and the whole country east of the Gulf of Bothnia was often called Österland. The Swedish official delegates to the Peace Conference mention in full earnest, as an important part of their evidence as to the administrative independence of Åland, the trivial fact that certain free-hand surveys or maps of the County of Åland show the following inscription written across the "Skiftet": — "Here is the boundary of Finland". By this, of course, is meant "Finland Proper" — a province which goes by this name right up to the present day. As a matter of fact, the designation "Finland" is popularly used in the Swedish-speaking districts of Ostrobothnia to describe those parts of the country where Finnish is spoken. As recently as last summer, the writer of this pamphlet was informed, by a Swedish-speaking peasant, that a certain direction was "the way to Finland". Does this prove that there is an administrative separation between the Swedish and Finnish parts of Ostrobothnia?

The Swedish experts lay much emphasis on the colouring of the older maps. The delegates regard as important evidence the fact that on Hermelin-Hellström's map of 1799 the provinces of Finland are coloured, while Åland is not. Again, in an article in the "Forum" of 16th. Nov. 1918, a Swedish writer, L. Kihlberg, refers to the same map (which was used at the peace negotiations at Nystad in 1809) and says that it confirms the opinion that Åland was a Fin-

nish province. Professor M. G. Schybergson of Helsingfors and Dr. Erik Hamnström of Stockholm draw different conclusions from the same map, and severely criticise each other's views. These discrepancies call forth a smile when one bears in mind the fact that these old maps were always hand-coloured, which is quite sufficient to account for the presence of colour in one print and its absence from another. On the old map of Andreas Bureus (1626) which has been the subject of much discussion and is reproduced in the wide-spread "Atlas de Finlande" (1910) — the colours are so distributed that the main part of Åland is represented in green, like several of the smaller islands near the Finnish coast; another part is marked in the same yellow colour as is used to denote the Finnish mainland, and Upland in Sweden; while a third part is coloured mauve. Does this mean therefore that Åland consisted of three independent portions? Such then is the character of the evidence afforded by these old maps — evidence which the Swedish delegates to the peace conference find so conclusive that they doubt whether it is really necessary to corroborate it by such evidence as may be obtained from documents and Public Acts!

A characteristic fact, which throws light upon the relations between Sweden and Åland in the 18th. century, is recorded by the Finnish historian, Professor Carl von Bonsdorff, in his pamphlet on the "Position of Åland under the Swedish Régime", which contains a great deal of valuable information: Two Swedish travellers — Fredrik Silfverstolpe who in 1757 crossed from Stockholm to Finland, and H. A. Hülphers who accomplished the same journey in 1760 — describe in their diaries how they left the 'land of Sweden' and proceeded to Åland, which 'formed part of a Finnish Governorship'. They record their astonishment at hearing the population speak a language which in any case was Swedish!

If any further proofs are required, we may finally refer to the "Geography of the Kingdom of Sweden", by Erik

Tuneld, of which the seventh edition was printed in the year 1794. He gives the following subdivisions of the "landskap" (provinces) of the Grand-Duchy of Finland (pp. 261, 262) which we reprint here in a reduced facsimile:

§. 7.

Finlands Fördelning.

Det består af VII Landskaper, nemligen:

- I. Egentliga FINLAND, Lat. *Finlandia stri-
cte sic dicta*; med BJÖRNEBORGS
LÄN eller SATAKUNDA, Lat. *Sata-
cundia*.
- II. Ön ÅLAND, Lat. *Alandia*.
- III. ÖSTERBOTTEN, Lat. *Ostro-Botnia*.
- IV. TAWASTLAND, Lat. *Tavasthia*.
- V. NYLAND, Lat. *Nylandia*.
- VI. SAWOLAX, Lat. *Savolaxia*.
- VII. Svenska KARELEN, Lat. *Carelia*.

The same subdivisions are also given in the earlier editions. How could this have been possible were it not for the incontestable fact that Åland was a part of Finland?

Reasons why Åland has been United with Finland.

There is no doubt as to the reasons why Åland was administratively united with Finland. In summer time the Skärgård Sea is easily navigated even by small craft; and during a great part of the winter it is ice-bound, so that sleigh traffic is rendered possible. In former times, when there were no ice-breakers, navigation by sailing boats was practically impossible as soon as the harbours were frozen, and the Åland Sea then formed a strong barrier between Sweden and Finland (cf. the map in Fig. 4).

The Political Relations between Åland and Finland at the Peace Conference of 1809, and subsequently.

During the Swedish régime, Finland was an integrate part of the Swedish Kingdom, but it is often mentioned sepa-

rately in Acts and Edicts. It was called a Grand-Duchy. Its representatives were sometimes summoned separately, and its provinces were at several periods united under a common general-governorship. The most famous of these General-Governors, Count Pehr Brahe, who held office in the 17th. century, expressed the opinion that Finland, if left in peace and under good rule "would compare favourably with many of the kingdoms of Europe, and not merely with the less considerable among them".

It was however only at the time of the Russian conquest that Finland, according to the words of Alexander I "was raised to be one among the nations". Its constitution was confirmed by every new Regent. It had a separate throne — literally as well as figuratively — from which Alexander I and Alexander II delivered their throne-speeches at the opening of the Diet of Borgå in 1809 and that of Helsingfors in 1863.

Swedish historians nowadays maintain that since Finland was not a constitutional State before 1809, Åland was ceded by Sweden separately, and not as a part of Finland. It is true that the Swedish representatives tried to save Åland for Sweden because of its strategic importance, and therefore emphasised their contention that it had been "Swedish from time immemorial" — a phrase to which Swedish political writers attach much importance, but which cannot disprove the historical fact that for a long period Åland had been a part of Finland. The phrase could have been applied with equal justification to any other part of Finland inhabited by a Swedish population. The Russian delegates, Rumiantsev and Alopæus, pointed out on various occasions that Åland belonged to Finland; and in the peace treaty, Åland was ceded to Russia without reserve, being explicitly mentioned in connection with the Province of Åbo and Björneborg (*Åbo och Björneborgs län med ögruppen Åland*). It is difficult to understand how these words could be interpreted so as to prove that Åland was ceded separately.

The composite name of the province in question indicates that it has been formed by two parts which at an earlier period were administrated separately. It was therefore all the more natural that Aland should be mentioned, especially as its future position had been so much discussed during the peace negotiations.

Moreover there is an important fact in the earlier history to which the Handbook on *The Åland Islands*, published by the British Foreign Office, calls attention:

In the Peace Treaty of Nystad (1721), concluding the war during which Finland was occupied by the Russian troops for seven years and the Aland Islands were conquered by Tsar Peter in person in 1714, Finland, excepting the province of Wiborg, was restored to Sweden, together with the Aland Islands. But *these are not specially mentioned in the treaty* which simply states, in its Article V. —

"Sa Majesté Czarienne s'engage en échange et promet de restituer et évacuer à sa Majesté et la Couronne de Suède le Grand Duché de Finlande excepté la partie qui en a été réservée ci-dessous dans le Règlement des Limites, laquelle apartiendra à Sa Majesté Czarienne."

If we should maintain the standpoint advocated by Sweden, that the Aland Islands were not a part of Finland before 1809, we should arrive at the absurd conclusion that they were never formally restored to Sweden after the conquest by Peter the Great. In fact both Sweden and Russia, by concluding the Peace of Nystad, have recognized that they regarded the Aland Islands, according to international law, as a part of the Grand Duchy of Finland.

An Article in Dagens Nyheter Feb. 3rd. 1918.

In concluding these remarks, let us quote an article published on Feb. 3rd. 1918 in the "Dagens Nyheter" (Stockholm) — the organ of the liberal government then in power. The writer of the article concedes most of the above points, and says: —

"After following for the past ten years the discussions concerning the Aland question, and especially those versions which have appeared in Swedish quarters, we can affirm *that for us the Alands have never constituted, and do not now constitute, a separate portion of our own flesh and blood, in the nature of an "irredenta" which Swedish national feeling reclaims as part of Sweden*¹⁾ Discussions of the reasons which underlie this fact are superfluous. Briefly, the explanation is as follows: — Sweden was deprived of the Alands at the same time as she was deprived of Finland. During the close of the past century we have become accustomed to the thought that those parts of Sweden which were ceded in 1809 are now severed, and will remain severed, from the Swedish realm, in spite of the fact that they contain a large population which is Swedish both in speech and in culture. *From the point of view of Swedish culture, Aland did not occupy any special position among these districts*¹⁾. The fact that special importance was subsequently attached to the little group of islands in the Baltic Sea must be attributed to another reason which will be explained later.

*Meanwhile, in connection with what has already been pointed out, it must be affirmed that the attempts which have recently been made by the conservative elements in Sweden to maintain that Aland, after its separation from Russia, can no longer be looked upon as Finnish territory, have met with complete failure.*¹⁾ Apart from forensic subtleties, one should bear in mind that during the past century Aland has been under Finnish administration; the Alanders have used Finnish currency and the Finnish postal system; they have been subject to Finnish laws and to the Finnish Customs- and pilotage-regulations. The contention that Aland cannot now be regarded as part of Finland, or that it is left entirely without an owner, cannot be defended with any success before the bar of public opinion."

"It is possible to sympathise with the movement among the Alanders who desire that the islands should now be incorporated in Sweden; nevertheless in politics we should beware of allowing our feelings to run away with our capacity for cool reflection. A responsible Government must take into careful consideration both the present and the future obligations which would necessarily arise as a consequence of the *annexation*¹⁾ of Aland.

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

„Sweden's best and most far-sighted policy for the future, therefore, seems to demand that she should renounce what appears at the moment to be a favourable opportunity, unattended by danger, of *annexing*¹⁾ the Åland Islands; and that, on the other hand, she should keep a watchful eye on her interests so as to ensure that the archipelago shall remain unfortified, and that its political status may be such as not to permit its use by any Power for the purpose of military operations.”

On the 14th of February "Dagens Nyheter" published an article containing the following statement:

„Consistency in thought and in action is not the strong point, however, of our nationalists. They have never been able to forget that in the year 1905 the Norwegians made use of that same right of selfdetermination which they now so fervently *vindicate on behalf of the Ålanders.*"²⁾

It is interesting to compare with the candid words quoted above, the statements which were served up to the continental public in M. Sjoestedt's pamphlet published in 1919, which has already been referred to. He explicitly states that the loss of Åland— "an integrate part of the Swedish fatherland" was felt by Sweden infinitely more cruelly, than the loss of all Finland. As a matter of fact, the fate of Åland, at that time, interested at most a number of statesmen and military authorities — while the whole Swedish nation was in mourning over the loss of Finland, the "abode of fidelity" as it was described by Tegnér, Sweden's great national poet.

Åland and the Treaties of Paris and St. Petersburg.

It was not until the "Crimean War" of 1855—56, that the attention of the general public was drawn to the Åland Islands through the bombardment and destruction of the Russian fortress of Bomarsund by the Allied Fleet. At the subsequent peace conference in Paris, as is well known, a paragraph was inserted in the peace treaty, to the effect that

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

²⁾ Italicised by the author of the article from which the above quotation is taken.

henceforward Russia should not construct any military establishments on the Åland Islands. Already in 1855 a guarantee of their integrity had been given to Sweden and Norway by the Western Powers, which expired, however, when the union between these two kingdoms was dissolved. At St. Petersburg in 1908, Sweden concluded a new treaty in which all the Baltic Powers joined, and in which they declared that they were resolved upon maintaining the *status quo* in the Baltic.

Russia's desire to secure the formal abrogation of the servitude on Åland, which she regarded as a humiliating restriction of her sovereignty, was not fulfilled; but the new treaty was so vaguely formulated that it gave rise to various interpretations. Swedish diplomats said that it provided "une solution boiteuse" as regards questions which still remained open. The treaty involved no change in the administrative position of Åland, which still remained part of the Province of Åbo in Finland; but it considerably emphasised the menace which threatened Sweden from that quarter. This danger became still more obvious when, during the World War, Russia proceeded to construct fortifications on that island, and to station there a considerable detachment of troops.

Although this "pistol levelled at the heart of Sweden" was not intended to be fired in that direction, nevertheless Sweden thereby experienced an uneasy feeling of insecurity, which has been mainly responsible for her recent policy in the Åland question.

Changes in Sweden's Policy in Respect of Finland and of the Åland Question.

The policy adopted by the various Swedish parties in regard to Åland is so intimately connected with the general policy which they adopted in the World War, and in their relations with Finland, that it is necessary at this point to

give a brief account of its successive changes during the past few years.

The Russian policy with regard to Finland, which was inaugurated by the violation of the constitution which the tsars had sworn to respect, deliberately aimed at the destruction of Finnish autonomy and at the complete russification of the Grand Duchy. This necessarily caused much uneasiness in Sweden, both because of the old bonds of sympathy which united her with her former province, and because it was obvious that Finland was to be made a basis for military enterprises directed towards the West. At the outbreak of the Great War it was clear to most Swedes that a complete Russian victory would be very dangerous to the interests of their country. A group of nationalists, who displayed much activity at various times and possessed considerable influence, were of opinion that Sweden should profit by this "hour of destiny" to settle her account with her old enemy Russia, by liberating Finland, thus winning back the prestige which she had lost through her defeats in past centuries, and regaining the hegemony in the North. This hegemony had proved illusory since the collapse of "Scandinavianism". Sweden-Norway had failed to come to the assistance of Denmark in her fight with Germany in 1863.

In return for helping Finland, Sweden hoped to obtain something more than these immaterial rewards. She hoped to win back Åland; and some of the nationalists hoped that she might even acquire those portions of Northern Finland West of the River Kemi, which did not belong to Finland before 1809. It should be observed that these districts are inhabited exclusively by Finns, and that this wish — which was expressed, for instance, in a pamphlet written by M. Staël von Holstein — was therefore entirely at variance with the principle of the self-determination of nationalities.

The leaders of the Swedish Conservative Party was opposed to any form of intervention which might prejudice Sweden's neutrality, but the Conservatives continued to follow with great sympathy Finland's struggle for life and

freedom. Later, at the critical period when the Whites of Finland, after the outbreak of the Russian revolution, were threatened with annihilation under the surging wave of Bolshevism, and took up arms in the cause of freedom, law and order, — then many influential conservative statesmen of Sweden thought that the moment had come for their country to assist Finland in her distress. As to the wishes of Finland in this respect, we may quote the following extract from a speech delivered on March 5th. 1918 by Professor K. G. Westman of Uppsala University, a former member of the conservative Hammarskjöld Cabinet: — "There is much evidence to prove that the feelings and wishes of Finland have from the first been in the sense that a Free Finland should take her natural and legitimate place among the Scandinavian nations, and that she did not wish anything better than to be placed on the knees of Sweden and to be taken care of by that country". Leading articles in the most influential Finnish newspapers "Helsingin Sanomat" and "Uusi Suometar" expressed the same ideas, and even in remote corners of the country, peasants spoke of their hope that Sweden would come to the aid of Finland. As was pointed out by the Swedish statesman who has already been mentioned, it would not have been impossible to obtain the approval of the Entente for an intervention of this kind, and Germany would probably have raised no objections. According to Professor Westman, if Sweden had adopted this policy, she would have been afforded "*an opportunity of gaining Åland with the consent of Finland*", besides obtaining advantages of a general political nature which are obvious in the light of what actually happened". There was the risk of a rupture with Russia, but Professor Westman considered that good diplomacy might have diminished or removed it.

The views of many Liberals at the beginning of the Civil War in Finland are seen from the article quoted on page 18, and in the statements of the Liberal Premier M. Edén who, in his answer to M. Vennerström's interpellation of Feb.

20th. 1918 declared: — "We cannot deliberately adopt a course of action which, in fact, implies that Sweden assumes responsibility for the future of Finland, with all its consequences, and would most probably involve our country in the world-wide conflagration from which we have hitherto succeeded in saving her." And as Professor Westman remarks, because the Premier would not do everything, he dared not do anything at all. Even the right of importing arms by transit through Sweden, though conceded to the Russian Empire, was denied to the legal Government of Finland, which Sweden had been the first to recognise; and the almost weaponless government troops of Finland had to capture their arms from the enemy, or to obtain them from Germany, the country which from that moment appeared to be the only possible saviour in the struggle for existence then being fought out by the Whites of Finland against Bolshevism. The action of the Liberal Cabinet was mainly justified by its difficulties with the Swedish socialists of the Extreme Left, who, though few in number, were active and arrogant.

As a consequence of this policy, there arose in Finland a feeling of bitterness which can be understood only by those who themselves have been in the utmost danger, and have in vain waited for the help of their brothers and their friends. This bitterness was in a great degree relieved, however, by the heroic self-sacrifice of many individual Swedish men and women on behalf of Finland. In words, at least, leading Swedish statesmen still showed much courtesy towards Finland. In the debate on the budget for 1918, the Swedish Premier pointed out that although the solution of the Aland question was no doubt urgent, yet various solutions were possible, and when choosing between them it was necessary to bear in mind the *important position which Finland would eventually assume as regards Sweden and Scandinavia as a whole*. Further — "*In treating the Aland question, the present Government feels it to be its unquestionable duty to make every possible effort to ensure*

*a solution which will preserve the complete friendship that exists between Finland and Sweden".*¹⁾

Has this purpose been realised? Already in March the Ex-Minister, M. Westman made the following statement in his speech at Uppsala: — "When, in the debates on the budget, the Premier was urged to endeavour to acquire Åland for Sweden, he replied that 'the fundamental principle of his Baltic policy was the preservation of our friendship with Finland'. In the interests of truth, it ought to be admitted that this purpose has not been attained. *At the present moment the Government is exposed to the double danger of neither obtaining Åland nor preserving the complete friendship of Finland*".¹⁾ This warning, which sounds almost a prophecy, has not been taken to heart, either by the Liberals or by the Conservatives of Sweden. M. Westman added the following words, which we shall do well to bear in mind nowadays, when the Swedish Press is full of astonishment and rage at the unparalleled circumstance that Finland refuses gratuitously to give up a part of her territory to Sweden — a refusal which the Swedish Press characterises under the heading "The Russian methods of Finland": — "*There can be no doubt*" said M. Westman, "*that Finland will not give away Åland without further ceremony, for the sake of a long standing friendship*".¹⁾

In spite of these warnings the Liberal Government pursued a policy which eventually brought it to a point where it stood diametrically opposed to its own former declarations. Shortly after these statements had been made, the Liberal Government, as well as the King of Sweden in person, committed themselves — through a promise made to the delegates who came over from Åland — to do their utmost to support the Ålanders in their desire for re-union with Sweden; but on this occasion also they made a reservation to the effect that they hoped to accomplish this with the consent of Finland.

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

The Swedish Military Expedition to Åland.

Soon afterwards, however, the Swedish Government took a step which further complicated the situation, and was of such a nature as to render a Finnish policy of concessions in the Åland question practically impossible for the future.

The military expedition which was sent to the rescue of the Åland population, was despatched without any diplomatic steps having been taken in order to obtain the consent of the legal government of Finland. The purpose was no doubt to create a "*fait accompli*", which at the peace conference would be a better argument than many mere words. "It is true, considerable emphasis has been laid on the purely humanitarian — and non-political — purpose of this expedition". The phrase is not ours, but Professor Westman's, in his speech quoted above. It is well to bear in mind the doubts which these words, spoken by a Swedish Ex-Minister, seem to express; for the Swedish Press nowadays unanimously maintains that the purely humanitarian purpose of the Åland expedition was out of the question.

It is very sad to realise these things — especially for those who have thought, and still think, that a good understanding between Finland and Sweden is far more vital to both of them than any question concerning Åland. It is necessary, however, to give a brief summary of these events.

It must be pointed out that the accounts given in Swedish and Finnish sources show considerable discrepancies. As in other questions where a code of honour is concerned, it would be of interest to both parties that at some future date an investigation should be made by an impartial authority. The story began with the arrival from Finland of a corps of "Whites" who, after having escaped annihilation at the hand of a numerous "Red" army, reached Northern Åland, and began to wrest the island from the Russian troops quartered there. These numbered some 1,500 men, who were re-inforced by 200 Finnish "Reds"; while

the "White" troops were only 500 strong, including over a hundred Ålanders. In spite of their inferiority in number and in arms, the "Whites" gained several victories, and it was their firm conviction that they would conquer Åland. On the Finnish mainland, the disproportion between the fighting parties had often been much more pronounced, and the struggle had nevertheless resulted in victory for the "Whites".

In Stockholm there were rumours of serious defeats inflicted on the "White" troops in Åland, and of terrible massacres of the non-combattant population. As a matter of fact, during the whole "war" on Åland only two or three Ålanders lost their lives, and the loss of property was inconsiderable. But the Swedish Government, which had refused every help to Finland, was induced by these rumours, and by the petition of the Ålanders, to send a military expedition to the rescue of Åland. The Finnish "White" detachment was not in direct communication with General Mannerheim, but the Swedish Naval Minister, Baron Palmstierna — now Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Branting Cabinet — offered his assistance in the transmission of telegrams. Yet the most important of these — sent by General Mannerheim — either never arrived at all, or never reached the "White" troops. The Finnish Government's Representative in Stockholm, M. Gripenberg, misled by the erroneous information given to him by the Swedish authorities, was induced to urge the Finnish corps to give up the fight, because of what he conceived to be its untenable situation. So the commander of this small Finnish detachment resolved, with a heavy heart, to follow the advice of M. Gripenberg and the Swedish officers, and to negotiate with the Russians through the intermediary of the Swedes. These negotiations led to the following result: —

The Finnish "White" troops were disarmed and sent to Northern Finland via Sweden, while the Russians were allowed to depart freely with arms and provisions, which they subsequently delivered to the Finnish "Reds" in Åbo.

It was only after they had arrived at their destination that the "White" troops discovered, to their extreme indignation, that General Mannerheim had never wished them to surrender — which was quite contrary to the statements made to them by the Swedish authorities.

The Beginnings of the Separatist Movement on Åland.

The separatist movement on Åland had already begun before the arrival of the Swedish military expedition. The political situation in Finland appeared almost hopeless both during the war, when the effects of Russian oppression were felt more profoundly than ever before, and after the Russian Revolution, when anarchistic movements became more and more prevalent. It was therefore natural that the Ålanders should look for help from abroad. As early as August 1917 a secret meeting was held by representatives from nine of the parishes of Åland. The six easternmost parishes, however, were not represented at this meeting. Thus, the statement of the Swedish delegates to the Peace Conference that this meeting formed "une représentation populaire de l'archipel tout entier" is incorrect. The Ålanders who took part in this meeting had not been elected for this special purpose and were not empowered to act on behalf of their parishes in this respect. The resolution which was passed at this meeting was not made generally known in the Ålands. The Stockholm Press reported that on this occasion, opinions were expressed to the effect that the Islanders desired re-union with Sweden. It is a significant fact that, in several cases, opinions expressing these separatist tendencies became known in certain circles in Stockholm even before they obtained general currency among the islanders themselves. In this connection, an association called "Ålands Vänner" (The Friends of Åland) may be mentioned; most of its members are Ålanders, but the leading rôle is played by Swedish subjects. It is at all events certain that exhortations have been addressed from

Stockholm to the Alanders, calling upon them to organise manifestations of public opinion in favour of the separation of the Alands Islands from Finland. In order to attain this object, an agitation was set on foot at Christmas 1917. The manifestation was organised in the following manner: — the inhabitants of the Alands were asked to set their signatures to a statement which did not contain the text of the petition, but was merely a general summary of its contents; the full text was not made known to the Alanders until about three months afterwards. This petition expressed a desire that the government of Sweden — while acting conjointly with a free and independent Finland such as, they hoped, would be recognised by the King of Sweden and by his people — would succeed in solving those difficulties which prevented the realisation of the Alanders heartfelt wish for union with Sweden. Representatives of the easternmost parishes of Aland, that is to say Braendoe, Kumlinge and Koekar, did not take part in the preparation of this petition. The deputation from Aland, which was sent to Sweden with this petition, was delayed, with the result that it did not arrive in Stockholm before Sweden had unreservedly recognised the independence of Finland (January 1918). The Aland delegates were received however in very friendly fashion by the King of Sweden and by the Swedish Government. In March 1918, after public opinion on the Aland Islands had been strongly influenced by the events which have been related in the foregoing chapter, a new appeal — this time, in the form of a telegram — was addressed to the Finnish Government, the King of Sweden and the Emperor of Germany. The Finnish Government rejected this appeal. The King of Sweden repeated his former promise to give all possible assistance to the Alanders. The German Emperor declared that Germany had no intention of interfering in the political status of the Aland Islands.

After a period of intensive agitation, elections for an unofficial "Landsting" were organised in November 1918.

On behalf of the Alanders this "landsting" resolved to send a petition to the President of the United States, the Kings of Great Britain and Italy and the President of the French Republic, requesting them to take such measures that the Alanders might be allowed to hold a plébiscite through which they might, in accordance with the principle of the selfdetermination of nationalities, decide their own fate. A similar request formed the basis of the appeal which was addressed to the Peace Conference by the Aland delegates. M. Julius Sundblom was one of these delegates; and from this time onwards, he played a more and more conspicuous rôle in the separatist movement. This deputation obtained the assistance of the Swedish representatives abroad and was enabled, in a series of interviews with the leading statesmen of the Entente, to give full expression to the views of its members.

Nevertheless all these petitions and appeals failed to produce any direct and positive result.

*Casual Character of Public Opinion among the Alanders.
Cultural Relations of the Aland Population with Finland.*

The events which have just been related formed the basis of public opinion among the Alanders, who have always shown great respect for authority and a keen eye for their own advantage. A sense of insecurity characterised the periods of war and revolution. The revolution aroused all the more uneasiness on Aland, since socialism is practically non-existent among the indigenous population. The Alanders cherished the belief that Sweden was in a position to protect their persons, their property and their language against Russian and Finnish Reds alike. When in cases like this the die has once been cast and a decisive step has been taken, it is not easy to turn back. The leaders are compromised; the masses share their hopes and fears. The "mass suggestion" and an appearance of complete unanimity are apt to induce the casual observer to overestimate the strength and depth of public opinion;

and yet, but two years before, no one may have had the slightest suspicion that any unrest existed. In the present case, in the absence of all proof of the assertion that the Alanders have always yearned for re-union with "their old fatherland Sweden", the *onus probandi* lies entirely with the Swedes. We will nevertheless give decisive proofs here of the very opposite of this assertion.

In general, the Aland population in peace time has never before taken any active interest in politics. It consists of peasants, fishermen and sailors, the latter including a number of shipowners and captains of vessels. Most of the ships are owned, however, by a great number of small shareholders. Clergymen, Government officials, a few teachers, and the owners of a few small estates — these, with the business men, form the upper classes on Aland, numbering not more than a few hundreds; and, together with those peasant youths who have attained to higher education, they have practically all been educated in Finland. Among the seven prominent Alanders who are enumerated in Radloff's description of Aland (1796), there were one Bishop of Åbo (died 1821), one Dean of Åbo and three professors of the University of that town — the ancient capital of Finland; the sixth was a wealthy alderman of Stockholm, and the seventh a General, Baron Carpelan, belonging to a Finnish noble family. During the nineteenth century several Alanders gained prominence in Finland.

Aland also possesses a great cultural treasure in its old songs, dances and other ethnographical peculiarities. These have been collected with great love and insight, especially by M. Otto Andersson, in some respects the most prominent man whom the Alands have ever produced, and the very incarnation of "Ålandism". His work of developing the musical and ethnographical interests of the Swedish population of Finland, with the object of creating a genuine peasant culture, has been of the utmost importance to that population, and is of such a character as to prove the absolute incorrectness of the assertion that Aland is of no

importance as regards the culture of Swedish Finland. At the recent Swedish Song Festival in Helsingfors, in June 1920, under the leadership of this son of Åland, 2,500 Swedish singers were assembled — a greater number than have ever before sung together in the Swedish tongue. Their enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm of the listening public, which was almost as numerous as the whole population of Åland, was a signal proof of the living national consciousness and of the hopes for the future of the Swedish-speaking people of Finland, who number some 385,000 — nearly five times greater than the whole nation of Icelanders, and fifteen times greater than the population of Åland. The Ålanders have always had their cultural support in this Swedish population of Finland, which has given to Swedish literature some of its greatest poets, and cultivates science and art in emulation with every other nation or nationality; they will always be better understood there than anywhere else.

Let us hear what M. Andersson himself says on the subject; he is better qualified than any one else to give a verdict of this kind. In criticising the attitude of the Åland delegates he explicitly states that the *cultural bonds between Sweden and Åland have always been insignificant*¹⁾. During the last quarter of a century, no Swedish representative of culture has exercised any considerable degree of influence on Åland. All elementary schools, the People's High School, the Young Men's and Young Women's Associations, and the musical societies have close relations with Finland, where all Ålanders who have attained a higher degree of culture have been educated, including the members of the Separatist delegations.

The Swedish delegates to the Peace Conference did not give any proof for their assertion that public opinion has several times in the past pronounced that Åland ought to be considered as a territory independent of the provinces of

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

Finland (*indépendant des provinces finlandaises*). It is true that at the diet in Stockholm in 1765—1766 the Alanders expressed a wish that the *hürad* of Aland should henceforward be *judicially* referred to the court of Appeal of Stockholm, but this petition was actively opposed by the Swedish Governor at Abo and led to no results.

As to the feelings of the Alanders during the 19th. century, there are numerous proofs which show that they until 1917 regarded themselves as part and parcel of the people of Finland, possessing with them a common fatherland.

M. Sundblom himself, the leader of the present separatist movement, must be reckoned among those Alanders who have given the most emphatic assurances of their fidelity to Finland, their fatherland.

At an organised gathering of youths, which took place at Mariehamn on June 25th. 1898, M. Sundblom spoke as follows: —

..... "It is our duty to add to the heritage which we have received from our forefathers. We must dedicate all our energy to the fatherland which they have bequeathed to us

Swedes and Finns fought side by side when battles raged and snowdrifts were tinged blood-red. *We have one fatherland; we are a united people. So it is today; so shall it be for ever* ¹⁾

We shall rejoice at every advancement that can benefit the fatherland which we have in common

The day will dawn when our dual language problem will have become a thing of the past. The only memory of it that will remain with us will inspire both groups to noble rivalry in their efforts to bring the everlasting treasures of knowledge and science to the humblest cottage. And in the meantime, with hearts afire, we shall prolong our united exertions in the interests of our just cause. *We shall faithfully stand*

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

*shoulder to shoulder, Alander and Ostrobothnian, Nylander and Western Finn, landowner and peasant, burgher and labourer. Our love for our fatherland, equally revered by Swedish and Finnish sons, shall be our lodestar. Unity shall be our strength. Though the Swedish stock in Finland is spread over hundreds of miles of shore, we have but one cause at heart*¹⁾

Let us today confirm by oath our brotherhood. *We swear that we will work honestly and faithfully for our beloved fatherland*".

In his speech delivered at the Abo Musical Festival on June 17th. 1906 M. Sundblom declared: —

"This new phase has its roots in the social structure which we have inherited through hundreds of years from our forefathers, and on these firm and tried foundations we shall do all in our power to further Finland's prosperity and to maintain her future security. *It is work which demands devotion to our fatherland and its legal institutions, a sincere desire to set aside personal interests and to sacrifice everything in order to ensure the constant preservation of the Finnish nation as a free and enlightened people.*¹⁾ strong in the consciousness that our highest aim is a steadfast endeavour to maintain the independent and collective development of our land

We must direct all our efforts towards the inflexible *protection, defence and security of the position of the Finnish people*¹⁾ as a free nation bound only by just laws. *We have one fatherland. We inherited it from our forefathers and we shall bequeath it to our sons.*¹⁾ It is equally dear and precious to each one of us, whatever be his language, whatever be his social position.

*It shall never with justice be said that the Swedish-speaking population of Finland shirked their duty towards their beloved fatherland.*¹⁾

So long as we Swedish-speaking people faithfully serve our country and devote our disinterested and best exertions

The italics are ours.

to her welfare. no one who has any respect for himself and for the rights of others will venture to disparage a language in which our greatest poets have left us treasures that can neither tarnish nor decay.

It is our duty now, as it has ever been, to stand in the front rank in defence of our newly recovered freedom. Like the Northmen of old we will sing as we build strong ramparts for the defence of law and order in our dear fatherland. In this work we will manifest that love of our country which dwells in our hearts, and shall ever dwell there.

We must apply all our strength, fortitude and faith to secure such liberation and progress as will further the welfare and improve the lot of every dweller in the land, and it will be our privilege to create an era of prosperity and contentment throughout the thousand shores of Finland's lakes and seas.

*Hand in hand with our Finnish-speaking compatriots we will advance step by step in the high mission which lies before us. No one shall be an outcast, for our fatherland belongs to all of us, and claims the love of all of us in equal degree."*¹⁾

At the Musical Festival at Mariehamn on June 24th. 1908 M. Sundblom declared: —

„We owe an infinite debt of gratitude to our forefathers. We can repay this debt by adding to the heritage which they have bequeathed to us, and by diligently augmenting the wealth and prosperity of our native land. To accomplish this we must eschew all roughness in word and deed; we must before everything fashion for our fatherland a race of good citizens who, whenever the welfare of the land is at stake, will set a low value on their own personal interests and will endeavour to be a credit and a blessing to their country

Let us stand faithfully shoulder to shoulder, Alander and Ostrobothnian, Western Finn and Nylander, woman and

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

*man, peasant and master, old and young. Love for our country and mother-tongue shall be our inspiration, unity shall be our strength. The Swedish race in Finland is undivided and moves towards a single goal.*¹⁾

On this Midsummer's Day let us swear an oath of brotherhood: let us vow that *we will faithfully and honestly fulfil our duties towards our native hearths and our fatherland. May the sparkling, silvery waves bear witness to our oath. Glorious are the homesteads of Åland. Youths and men, young women and mothers, place your hands on your hearts, and answer — we will live, work, and die for the land that has bestowed on us such luminous and blessed homes.*"¹⁾

The last date on which M. Sundblom emphatically expressed his feelings as a patriotic Finlander was *June 10th. 1917*. On this occasion our experienced orator who was still representing Åland in the Diet of Finland, delivered a speech at the Swedish Musical Festival in Helsingfors.

He saluted the new epoch, which would bring to Finland her freedom and independence. "The foundations of the new Finland are already laid they are tried and secure foundations" He further spoke about "Finland's youths, who will *build a free and happy Finland for our descendants in succeeding generations*"¹⁾ We Swedes of this country have a precious heritage: we must defend it and augment it. It is our duty to work, with enthusiasm and set purpose, *for the fatherland which is indivisible and common to us all*,¹⁾ and for the culture and progress of the Swedish regions Our task means first and foremost the freedom, happiness and well-being of Finland".

"The eyes of the civilised world are now directed towards Finland. Together, therefore, let us examine ourselves closely. Let us see *that we are equal to the expectations laid upon us as a nation*".¹⁾

The italics are ours.

After perusing these extracts from the speeches of M. Sundblom, which are to be read *in extenso* in the Swedish newspapers of Helsingfors and Åbo, who can maintain that the separatist movement on Åland is really deeply rooted?

These earlier assurances are entirely at variance with the assertions of M. Sundblom during more recent years.

On Dec. 31st. 1917. he signed the Ålanders' petition (which was probably written by himself) to the King of Sweden. It is here asserted that after the separation from Sweden, which, according to the opinion of the Ålanders, "*was in conflict with both human and divine justice, the Ålanders never abandoned the hope, which dwelt in the depths of their hearts, that the islands should in the future be re-united with Sweden.*" ¹⁾

And at the Mariehamn Musical Festival on June 24th. 1919. M. Sundblom uttered the following words, which are more eloquent than true: —

"It may be said freely and openly that our yearning towards Sweden is true, deep-rooted, unanimous and unchanging Who among those who speak of a casual dissatisfaction *has sounded the depth and measured the strength of Åland's longing for Sweden?*" ¹⁾ We Ålanders who inhabit a well-determined region *which from time immemorial has been separated from Finland by the Skiftet* ¹⁾, from a small fragment of a nation, a fragment which after a cruel separation of more than a hundred years, seeks its way back to the mother-country

I exhort you, Ålanders now present here: — *place your hands on your hearts and answer, before God,* ¹⁾ does not the strong voice of the blood bid and command you to aspire to re-union with Sweden?"

Is any further proof wanted of the fact that Mr Sundblom is a traitor to the cause which, as he has affirmed — nay, sworn — lies nearest his heart? And this man has been received by princes, and by men mightier than many princes, as a worthy representative of public opinion in the

The italics are ours.

Alands. If the silver-tongued Mr Sundblom is to be taken in earnest, he has doomed himself to severe punishment not only in this world but also in the next; for he has called even Heaven to witness both his fidelity to his Finnish fatherland and his later wish that Aland should be separated from it. If he is not to be taken in earnest, as will most probably be his fate for the future, then he is reduced to a bombastic orator of a type not uncommon in the Northern countries. No doubt, however, Mr Sundblom will in the future be pardoned, and for the rest of his life in Aland or in Sweden will be invested with the glory of a martyr — a distinction which in his case has been somewhat cheaply attained.

As to Mr Björkman, the other great Aland leader, he belongs to an Abo family, and is thus no Alander at all. He is simply an unscrupulous politician who tries, while sacrificing the interests of his old country, to make his fortune in a new one.

The other Alanders who have appeared on the stage are merely mummies.

The Separatist Movement is a Desertion from the Swedish Nationality in Finland.

By the foregoing statements it has been proved that the Separatist movement of the Alanders is a desertion from their natural friends and tribesmen, the Swedish population of Finland, with whom the Alanders have from time immemorial shared both weal and woe. To that population the loss of Aland would be a very heavy blow, especially as the new Swedish University of Abo would lose a good deal of its *raison d'être*. To the Alanders a re-union with Sweden offers none of the advantages for which they hope and strive. Economically, the conversion of their Finnish money would cause them great loss. They would no longer be able to employ their small vessels for *cabotage* in Finnish waters. For a great part of the population, smuggling would be a profitable though far from beneficial occupation.

We have already shown (pp. 10—11) that the influence of the proposed change on the communications and the fishing trade of the archipelago east of Åland would be very pernicious. The fishermen also have their markets for their main products (salted small herring), east of the Baltic.

Socially, the result would be increased unrest. Socialism and a levelling cosmopolitanism would creep in from Sweden and would destroy the Ålanders' own solid peasant culture — a culture which will find in Finland its best support.

Among the Swedish-speaking population of Finland there is practically no social unrest, and the cultural development promises to proceed in a very democratic direction. The Swedish-speaking population has a proportionately large and well-to-do upper class, but nothing can be further from the truth than the assertion of the Swedish propagandist who said that it is only "an aristocracy governing the Finnish masses". This is one of those false statements which are a disgrace to Sweden's propaganda abroad.

The Swedish-speaking population of Ostrobothnia, in the Province of Wasa, consists mainly of peasants. In Southern Finland also, the agricultural population contains a large percentage of Swedes.

The map in Fig. 5 shows the distribution of the Swedish population in Finland in the year 1900.

Position of the Swedish Nationality in Finland.

The nationalistic feeling between Swedes and Finns in Finland is often somewhat acute. Much of this antagonism, however, has been removed through prudent legislative measures, and there is every reason to hope that the tension may be still further relieved by future legislation. The constitution of Finland recognises the equality of the Swedish and Finnish languages. Finnish is spoken by seven-eighths of the population, and day by day gains in relative importance. It already predominates in admini-

strative spheres, in Parliament, etc. But the Swedish language is spoken or understood by a large percentage of the Finns. In the present Parliament, for instance, where there are only twenty-two Swedish representatives, not less than 64 % of the members understand Swedish. All old books and documents concerning Finland are written in Swedish. It is therefore very difficult for any official, any lawyer, or any man of science to dispense with a knowledge of that language. All students learn it, and every official is forced by law to give proof of his knowledge of both Finnish and Swedish. Moreover, six hundred years, the period during which Finland belonged to Sweden, have had such profound effects on the whole cultural development of the country, that the celebrated Swedish historian, Professor Harald Hjärne, could rightly say that after Sweden and Finland were separated there existed two Swedish States — that is to say, two States with Swedish laws and Swedish culture. At the present moment the differences between these States are more pronounced. The Finns have developed a culture of their own, using as its foundations the national epic, "Kalevala", and other original creations of the Finnish national spirit. In many ways however, Finland is still, in all its cultural relations apart from the question of language, a Scandinavian country.

The Swedish nationality in Finland now aspires to a kind of cantonal government. This system, which would provide a uniting bond between all Swedish provinces and cantons, would reduce to a minimum the possibility of political quarrels between Swedes and Finns. The project has met with sympathy from many leading Finns, and it is to be hoped that the remaining differences of opinion may be reconciled, and that it may be possible to reach an agreement which will guarantee to the Swedes the preservation of their language, while not hindering the continuance of their work in the interests of the common fatherland.

If the Swedish nationality in Finland succeeds in attaining the form of autonomous administration to which it now aspires, then the Alanders' demand for union with Sweden will be shorn of its last vestige of justification.

The Swedish Finlanders consider that the maintenance

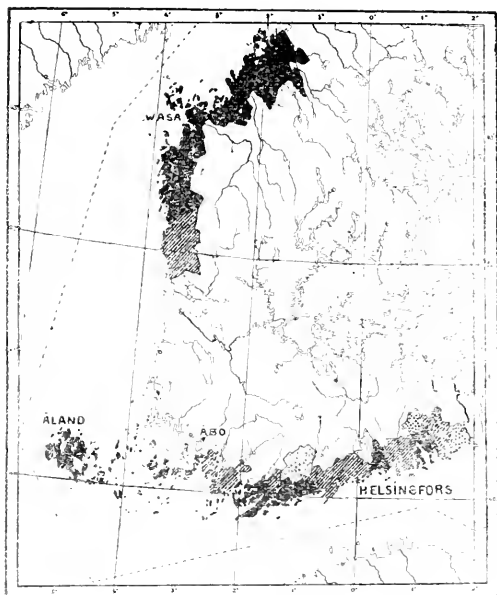


Fig. 5. Reproduction (on a reduced scale) of a map published in *Ymer*, 1905, compiled by Professor K. B. Wiklund, of Uppsala, showing the distribution of the Swedish population in Finland. Black = more than 90 per cent of Swedes; Darkest shading = 70—90 per cent; Broken lines = 50—70 per cent; Larger dots = 30—50 per cent; Small dots = 10—30 per cent.

of the Swedish language in Finland is not only a right which their nationality may justly claim, but that it is also advantageous to the country as a whole. The Swedish Finlanders have always been good patriots. The National Anthem and most other patriotic songs were originally written in the Swedish language, which was earlier pre-

dominant among the upper classes of Finland. During the epoch of Russian oppression, and during the civil war, the Swedes of Finland fought in the foremost ranks for freedom, law and order in their country. They form a connecting link between the Scandinavian countries and Finland, which — both from the cultural and from the political points of view — would, in the absence of the Swedish element, be still more isolated than under present conditions.

The Aland Home Rule Act.

The Alanders have already been granted a measure of Home Rule which ensures the perpetual preservation of the Swedish language, and confers more extensive rights of self-government than those enjoyed in similar circumstances by any other small community in the world. They have also been exempted from military service. The Swedish Press has considerably emphasised the fact that the representatives of the Swedish party in the Finnish Parliament were divided in their attitude towards this Act. About half of their number voted against it at its final stage. This difference of opinion, however, was due to a disagreement on certain minor details; even the most ardent Swedish nationalists among them conceded that the stipulation as to language was quite satisfactory.

In their present state of excitement the Alanders have refused to avail themselves of this Act, but they will probably soon find out that it confers on them considerable advantages.

Is Sweden Interested or Disinterested in the Aland Question?

The Swedish parties of the Left have forgotten the good intentions which they formerly entertained of acquiring Aland only with the maintenance of Finland's friendship.

More recently they have shown their determination to secure it at all costs. Accordingly, the principle of the self-determination of nations has been placed in the foreground. Swedish newspapers, irrespective of the political parties which they supported, have shown admirable discipline in taking up this watchword. The Swedish public is very receptive to all generous impulses; but it is no more well-balanced than that of most other countries, where nationalistic sentiments are concerned. Moreover, it is more credulous than the public of most other countries. On this occasion, therefore, the Swedes have been able to work themselves up to a high pitch of excitement and determination, and the government and nation have shown their first resolute and united action since the beginning of the present period of international conflict. Sweden has exhibited the utmost caution during the whole of the world-war. She herself has not been engaged in war since 1814. Yet now she unsheathes at least an inch of her sword — against Finland, the best friend she has had during the whole of her history!

It is very probable that a large section of the population of Sweden, especially the better-educated class, is guided by sincere feelings of sympathy towards the Alanders' appeal. In exhibiting this sympathy, however, they entirely overlook the interests of Finland and its Swedish nationality, of which they have so little knowledge; nor do they bear in mind the events which have led up to the present situation; nor the numerous public pronouncements made by Swedish statesmen, which provide ample proof that Sweden is anything but disinterested in the Aland question.

Let us quote M. Erik Sjöestedt's semi-official pamphlet, which is obviously inspired by the Swedish Minister at Paris, Count Ehrensvärd, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs at Stockholm and one of the most ardent adversaries of Finland in the Aland question. In that pamphlet (page 12) he says: — "*The possession of Aland is essential to the*

*security of Stockholm*¹⁾, since (page 13) the Aland Islands form an advanced rampart of the Swedish capital." M. Sjoestedt produces a considerable amount of evidence in support of these statements, and even expresses the opinion that this question was chiefly responsible for Sweden's distrust of Russia. "The ancient fear of Russia which, right up to the World War, has poisoned the national life of Sweden (!) is chiefly grounded on the Aland question. Until a just solution of this question is attained, harmony and confidence between Sweden and a reconstituted Russia will remain problematical." He continues: "Russia will realise that the restitution of Aland to Sweden would be a measure calculated to improve and strengthen neighbourly (?) relations between the two countries" (page 37). "Sweden's possession of these islands is one of the conditions which render it possible for her to preserve an intimate entente with Norway and Danmark" (page 62). "All parties are unanimously united in their attitude towards the *Aland question* — *which proves that the Swedes as a whole consider it to be a matter vital to the interests of their country*"¹⁾ (page 25).

In his answer to M. Steffen's interpellation of May 17th, 1916 M. Wallenberg, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, made the following statement: — "Every one who has made himself familiar with the so-called Aland question, and has followed its historical development, must understand *that this question is of vital importance to Sweden*."¹⁾

The strategical importance of Aland, to which M. Sjoestedt devotes so many pages of his pamphlet, is treated in detail by the General Society for the Defence of Sweden in a pamphlet entitled "Aland", which forms the first number of the series "*Vårt Försvar*" ("Our Defence"). After consecrating forty-seven pages to the development of this subject, the author sets forth five formulated conclusions, of which four urge the necessity of Aland's re-union with Sweden on strategical grounds. If, after all the discussion

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

and all the polemics between the Liberal and Conservative newspapers of Sweden on the strategical importance of Aland, the Swedish Press now continues to affirm Sweden's disinterestedness in this respect. it must at least be admitted that the official classes of Sweden at any rate had such an interest. until it was replaced by their present purely humanitarian and absolutely disinterested sympathy for their poor oppressed tribesmen on Aland. But as recently as the beginning of July 1920 Professor Lundström, the Secretary of the Swedish National Association for the Maintenance of Swedish National Culture Abroad, in an open letter addressed to M. Mörne, the orator at the Swedish Song Festival at Helsingfors, refers to the grave danger which menaces Sweden from Aland!

The Aland Leaders' Further Promotion of the Interests of Disinterested Sweden.

In conformity with the attitude of official Sweden towards the Aland question, the principle of the self-determination of nationalities was from the very beginning pushed into the foreground — notwithstanding the fact that the Alanders cannot be said to form a nationality — and the Alanders themselves took the necessary steps, while Sweden looked on with great and not entirely inactive sympathy.

The first bows and appeals of the Aland delegates in London and in Paris in 1918 had no direct result. The statesmen who were now remodelling the world, already had their hands so full that they were not specially inclined to tackle the complications of this new political problem. On their return, the delegates were arrested by the Finnish authorities, but they were eventually released. Subsequently, as matters did not seem to be moving in the desired direction, the experienced delegates of the population of Aland made new bows and appeals, this time in the Swedish capital only, where they were received by the King in per-

son, as well as by the Prime Minister, who assured them that the utmost help would be afforded them in their desire for the separation of Åland from Finland; and the Finnish Government was kindly invited to transfer Åland to Sweden by allowing the Ålanders to determine their citizenship through a plébiscite — a ceremony which was somewhat unnecessary, as everyone could anticipate the result, the Ålanders and their leaders having engaged themselves through their former actions. The contemptuous attitude of Sweden towards Finnish sovereignty is shown by the astonishing fact that the King and Government of a nation could allow themselves to address such demands to a neighbouring nation whose independence they had unreservedly recognised, and with which they were at peace. In order to understand this attitude, we must assume that the Swedes have not yet fully realised that Finland is now an independent nation, equal in right, though perhaps not in might, to other small nations. Sweden still well remembers the time when Finland was merely a Swedish province; accordingly, in spite of her well-known politeness, she thinks that she has a right to treat Finland in a way in which she would never have treated Norway or Denmark. To these countries she would never have addressed a demand on their territory. Moreover, most Swedes have very vague ideas about that neighbouring country which they so seldom visit, and it has not yet dawned upon them that Finland desires to be treated as an equal. It is an interesting fact that many people who were born in Sweden, but are now living and thriving in Finland, — probably the majority of them — are in sympathy with the Finnish point of view in this conflict.

Neighbouring countries often have very prejudiced ideas about each other. Not all of those colonists who settle in a neighbouring country, especially among the labouring classes, belong to the best type of citizens of their own. As is well known, near relatives commonly have their small differences of opinion, which they settle in an uncompro-

mising fashion. As proofs of this assertion we may remember the long-continued quarrels between Sweden and Norway.

The conception which seems to lie behind Sweden's demand is that Finland, on her separation from Russia, was not a country but a territory, whose *dissecta membra* had a right to decide their own fate. This same idea is more openly, not to say naively, expressed in the pamphlet inspired by the Swedish Embassy in Paris. M. Sjoestedt says: "It is important to remember the fact that on the separation of Finland from Russia the Aland Islands *ipso facto* re-acquired their independence. What actually happened was a partial dismemberment of the Russian Empire, *and the only relations which the islands had with Finland were those conferred upon them by Russia in uniting the archipelago with the government of Finland*¹⁾. The archipelago of Aland, which was ceded ~~by~~^{by} Sweden separately, and not as a part of Finland, retained nothing more in common with the latter country once the Russian bonds had been severed; and it was nothing more nor less than usurpation on the part of the new Finnish Government, that in retaining those Swedish islands under its domination, it should refuse to apply a principle which formed the basis of its own right to existence."

Official Sweden may possibly deny this assertion and treat it as an unauthoritative statement made by a private individual. It is interesting, however, to observe that the well-known scientist Dr Stjernberg, Professor of Criminal Law at the University of Stockholm, attempts to formulate this same idea somewhat more concisely in maintaining that Finland is not "a fully established sovereign member of the European state system". This contention has already been completely refuted by Professor Hermanson. If Professor Stjernberg's arguments imply that Finland has not the right to defend the integrity of her territory, but that every other State has the right to demand

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

that she shall cede a part of it, then we may rightly ask what is the meaning of that independence which Sweden, together with most other States, has unreservedly recognised? In what degree is Finnish sovereignty restricted, and how long will this sovereignty continue to hover betwixt independence and dependence on the whims of neighbouring States? What other States possess or have possessed such an ambiguous form of independence? Professors of International Law will find these intricate questions somewhat difficult to answer.

Mr K. G. Westman, Professor of the History of Law at Uppsala University, seems to entertain an opinion different from that of his colleague at Stockholm. Speaking of Finland's prospects after the Russian Revolution, he says in the speech which we have often quoted, a speech which is characterised by a generous understanding of Finland's interests: — "An alternative path, perilous and untrodden, led towards *complete freedom and sovereignty*,¹⁾ and towards a participation in the influences of Western culture". It is clear that no free country, conscious of its freedom, can concede the justice of the monstrous theory of a sovereignty that is but half-established. Finland can never consent to any agreement with Sweden, which is not based upon the full recognition of her equality, her independence, and her full sovereignty.

Soviet Russia's Claims to the Alands.

Profiting by Sweden's contention that Aland is not a part of Finland, but may be regarded as a sort of No Man's Land, Soviet Russia, through the medium of Chitcherin, has put forward a claim to the islands. This *tertius interveniens* may perhaps be welcomed by Sweden, since the Russian claim is a logical consequence of that of Sweden. If Chitcherin's claim is acknowledged to be a just one, Sweden can negotiate directly with the Soviet concerning

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

the fate of Åland. Finland is horrified at the bare idea that Åland — in consequence of her exclusion from those territories which the Soviet has already recognised as constituting the sovereign state of Finland — might again be incorporated with Russia. A modern Solomon, in pronouncing judgment on this matter, would be more struck by the maternal sentiments exhibited by Finland towards her child, Åland, than by those of Sweden, whose actions expose it to such grave danger.

Russia of course has no more right to claim Åland, than any other part of the territory of Finland, after she once recognised her full independence.

The Latest Phase of the Conflict.

Rumour, apparently well-founded, indicates that the Ålanders were planning the convocation of a national assembly which should formally declare Åland's secession from Finland. The Finnish Government was therefore compelled to arrest M. Sundblom and M. Björkman, two of the leaders of the Separatist movement, and to bring them to trial on a charge of high treason. M. Eriksson was absent in Sweden, or he also would have been arrested. As might well be expected, this determined step roused a storm of indignation in Sweden. Nevertheless, the measure might easily have been foreseen. Indeed, Professor K. G. Westman had actually foreseen it; for on the 8th of March, 1918, he said: "It would be a painful thing for us to suffer a defeat in our foreign policy with all the world looking on; but the prestige of Sweden would thereby be affected, not her honour. In the Åland question, however, Sweden's honour is in danger, as I have stated on many a previous occasion I have reflected on the relations between Sweden and the population of Åland. What would it mean to the Ålanders if Sweden were to leave them to their fate?" Professor Westman goes on to say that the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs had already declared that the

aspirations of the Alanders were treasonable. He concludes: "*The Swedish Government therefore runs the risk of seeing punishment for high treason inflicted on those same Alanders whose actions she has herself encouraged.*"¹⁾

Notwithstanding these words of warning uttered by the Ex-Minister M. Westman, the Swedish Government persisted in encouraging the aspirations of the Alanders to such a point that the Finnish Government could no longer passively look on. The Swedish Government, although fairly warned, acted deliberately, and thus provoked a new conflict. The whole Aland dispute is in a large degree a question which concerns the prestige of a few statesmen and other persons occupying high positions in Sweden. As Professor Westman points out, they began by encouraging the Alanders. They then committed themselves by half-promises, until little by little they discovered that their own honour was at stake. Shall a deadly offence be committed against the whole Finnish nation, and shall the friendship between two neighbouring countries be sacrificed just because of the personal feelings of a few persons in high and influential positions?

Finland Accused of Resorting to "Russian Methods".

The Swedish Press now accuses Finlanders of adopting "Russian methods", well knowing that no charge could be more deeply felt in Finland. Official Sweden is not entitled to use invective of this kind. Semi-official Swedish pamphlets dealing with the Aland question, even as recently as in 1919, mention with great satisfaction the excellent relations between Sweden and autocratic Russia, Finland's oppressor, and the friendship which was confirmed by the visit of King Gustav to the Czar in July 1912. On this occasion, the General Governor of Finland, General Seyn — who in this country was looked upon in much the same light as that in which the Swiss people regarded Gessler —

¹⁾ The italics are ours.

was decorated with the Grand Cross of the Swedish Order of the Sword, at the formal request of Count Ehrensward, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs. This event was regarded by Finland as evidence that official Sweden did not disapprove of the oppressive methods of the Russian authorities in Finland. If the term "Russian methods" may be applied to the arrest and trial (in accordance with the laws of the country) of a citizen who has conspired against the integrity of the State, then most countries of the world have rendered themselves liable to this charge. Would the Swedish Press employ invective of this kind against the Great Powers, should they try to maintain their territorial integrity - or are such accusations to be exclusively employed against little Finland? How would Sweden herself act in a similar case?

The Swedes accuse us of inconsistency, on the ground that we have ourselves conspired against our Sovereign, the Russian Tsar and Grand Duke of Finland, and that at the same time we have complained of the autocratic methods employed by the Russian authorities in our country. Is the comparison really a fair one? Russia was our oppressor and Finland was an autonomous state under the same ruler, in his capacity of Grand Duke of Finland. Our Sovereign had broken his pledged word. During the course of the war, official Russia had declared her intention of abolishing the autonomy of Finland. She aimed at the complete russification of our country. It was a question of life or death - a mortal combat.

The Alanders have never suffered any kind of oppression from the side of Finland, which they have till now regarded as their fatherland. Moreover, Finland has now guaranteed the perpetual maintenance of the Swedish language on the islands, and has conceded to them a far-reaching measure of home rule.

The Swedes also forget that the legal system of a country works automatically, and that the Government has no right to interfere with it. The possibility of an amnesty

can only arise in cases on which a judgment has been pronounced. Sweden has exhibited so little regard and respect for the Finnish High Courts of Justice, that Swedish private citizens — like a certain Mr Ljungstedt, an estate owner and engineer, — have taken the liberty of writing letters to the High Court Judges, telling them in arrogant words exactly how they should act.

Sweden's Vain Endeavours to get the Dispute settled at the Peace Conference.

■ All this clamour raised by the Swedish Press served a direct practical purpose: the object was to draw the attention of the world to this matter, so that the Great Powers might be induced to intervene. From the very beginning of the conflict, Sweden, as a French journal put it, hoped that "when the day of final settlement should arrive, Sweden would receive the fruit of her loyal neutrality" (of course at the expense of Finland). The rulers of the world, however, showed no disposition to meddle in this question. Sweden therefore appealed directly to the Peace Conference, and invited its decision in the matter. Thus Sweden, whose Conservative Press had on so many occasions used such proud words in describing her desire to maintain (even in relation to the League of Nations) her absolute independence and sovereignty, declared herself to be a vassal of the Entente. Finland herself would never consider it proper formally to declare herself to be a vassal of the Entente, although from the practical point of view this is approximately her position, so long as she is protected by the fleets of the Allies against a possible revival of Russian Imperialism. The members of the Peace Conference declared quite logically that, since Sweden and Finland had never been at war with each other, they could not intervene. However, by way of providing some degree of consolation for Sweden, — who, as has previously been explained, felt that her honour was at stake, — the dispute was relegated to the League of Nations.

By the time this pamphlet appears in print, the League of Nations will probably have already decided whether it can handle this matter, and what further proceedings are to be taken in order to settle the dispute.

The Necessity for a Formulation of the Principle of the Self-Determination of Nationalities.

The attitude of Finland is purely conservative and defensive. She cannot recognise that Sweden has any right to aspire to the annexation of a portion of Finnish territory, however vitally Sweden's interests in this connection may be affected. Finland cannot concede that the Alanders have any right to conspire against a country which for many hundred years has been their fatherland, nor does she consider that the principle of the self-determination of nationalities can be applied to this particular case. If the League of Nations desires to exalt this principle into a supreme law which may be applied to all nations alike, then it must begin by formulating it in such way that it can be used as an established law or canon. A vague and too general use of this principle merely leads to entirely arbitrary decisions, unworthy of a Council which is intended to be the supreme political authority of all mankind. In the first place, Finland claims that *the decision should be made according to principles of international law, which are applicable to every nation irrespectively of its size and power.* The author of the pamphlet inspired by Count Ehrensvärd has rendered many a negative service to the cause which he seeks to defend; he has been bold enough even to attempt to formulate this principle,¹⁾ as follows:

"If a national fragment, whose territory is adjacent to a country which contains the principal mass of the nationality in question, has

¹⁾ Erik Sjoestedt, *La problème des Iles d'Aland*. Paris, 1919 p. 10.

expressed a desire to be incorporated in that country, then by virtue of the principle of the self-determination of nationalities the right of incorporation must be recognised by that country."

If the League of Nations were to proclaim the universal validity of such a law, then no objections could be raised against the claims of the Alanders; but, in view of the consequences in their own territories which would ensue from an adoption of that principle, is there really any probability that the ruling nations would proclaim the principle of self-determination in this exaggerated form, thus opening the field to countless disputes between almost all neighbouring nations? It would follow that every province, county, parish or village situated at the frontier, would be able to decide for itself to which state it desired to belong. In such circumstances Sweden could just as well stretch out her hands for the islands of the Quarken Sound, in the Gulf of Bothnia, or for the whole of Ostro-Bothnia, or indeed for the whole Swedish portion of the Province of Abo, on the mainland, together with the adjacent parts of the Province of Nyland, including the surroundings of the capital, Helsingfors, which lies in the Swedish region. She could further claim those islands in Esthonia which are inhabited by Swedes. Finland too, after some preparation through propaganda and agitation, might perhaps at some future time acquire the northernmost districts of Sweden — which are mainly inhabited by Finns — and the great iron ore fields of Swedish Lapland. The Laplanders indeed would begin to play quite a considerable rôle in politics through the alternatives offered by their adherence to Sweden, Norway, or Finland. In every quarter of the world may be found examples which will reduce this principle especially when applied in such an exaggerated form — to an absurdity. We will not speak of Ireland, which is not adjacent to any country but England, nor of Alsace-Lorraine;

for in these cases the reasons for and against self-determination differ in many material respects from those which can be adduced as regards Aland. But the Flemish parts of Belgium, the French-speaking communities of that kingdom which are distributed along the French boundary, the "Félibres" of Provence, the German "Sette Comuni" of Northern Italy, the Basques, the Catalonians, the French and German cantons of Switzerland — all these might at a moment's notice claim the abolition of their "contrat social" with their fellow-citizens, and their right to give their allegiance to some other country. Thus Corsica might desire to be united with Italy, and the Finne question might come up for settlement every successive year or decade. Unless Germany and those countries which were formerly under Austrian rule were excepted by a special clause, there would be frequent disputes of this kind all along their frontiers. Further, unless we take the Monroe Doctrine into account, then Canadians, Americans, Mexicans, and the various populations living near the frontiers of the South American States would all have the right of expressing their desire to be separated from the country which had hitherto claimed their allegiance, and to be incorporated in a new one. Moreover, why should the coloured nations be excepted? Unless they were excepted, it would be necessary to determine the particular colour or shade of skin which should qualify a people to exercise this right. If this principle be applied in the case of the Philippines, or Korea, or Egypt, these and similar questions will afford material for many interesting scientific debates, and it will be necessary to establish an International Institute which will determine the exact meaning of "nationality" and "national culture" and the difference between "language" and "dialect" — and the whole thing will be rather complicated.

Mr Sjoestedt's formulation of the principle of self-determination of nationalities can therefore hardly be said to be capable of practical application. A formulation of this prin-

eiple, which is certainly of the greatest importance and value, especially to all small nations, must be sought elsewhere. But as Mr Lloyd-George has so forcibly pointed out, this principle must be applied with common-sense, or it will impair the existing political conditions of the world, and will still further complicate them by introducing an element of uncertainty. The original formulation of Mr. Wilson's principle already implied that national aspirations should be satisfied in such a way as not to introduce new causes of discord and antagonism. The principle has so far been mainly used in the course of peace negotiations. On such occasions it is invested with the greatest importance, since it is to the interest of both parties to a peace treaty to create the conditions of a lasting peace.

As we understand it, the principle of self-determination implies *that no population ought to be hindered by political pressure from without, from freely developing its own national culture.*

So formulated, this principle cannot be applied to the population of Aland, which has never suffered any oppression at the hands of Finland, and has always had its best support in Finland's Swedish nationality, of which it constitutes the fifteenth part. This Swedish population of Finland is represented by an unofficial, elective institution called the "Folkting". The elections to the Folkting were held in April 1919. Votes were registered by 110,615 citizens of both sexes, above the age of 24. In the name of the Swedish nationality in Finland, the Folkting claims an absolute right to be heard before any decision is reached which might imply a change in the political status of the Alanders.

Aland and Eastern Karelia.

It is somewhat difficult to discuss the Eastern Karelian question while the peace negotiations between Finland and Soviet Russia are still in progress. We may however be

permitted to point out that, even if there is a vague analogy between this question and the Åland dispute, nevertheless the differences are very great. The Karelian population which lives beyond the eastern boundary of Finland has no other possibility of attaining a higher state of culture, while preserving its own language intact, than by joining Finland. The Karelians have suffered deeply from the neglect and oppression of successive Russian régimes, independently of political creed. They feel that Finland is far ahead of them in all ways, and they wish to follow in Finland's footsteps. During the war, the Finns made great sacrifices on behalf of their tribesmen in distress. Last but not least, Finland and Russia are still in a state of war, and are at present negotiating as to the best means of securing a permanent peace; while there has never been a war between Sweden and Finland.

Finland the Rampart of Scandinavia and of Western Europe.

The fundamental principle of Sweden's policy regarding Åland, as has been explicitly stated on many occasions during the course of the Swedish Press campaign, is that "the Gulf of Bothnia forms an *avant-poste* of Scandinavia, with Finland on the outside of it, while Åland is Scandinavia's outermost rampart". Such statements of the case would imply that Finland wishes to go her own way, seeking her friends East or South-East of the Baltic; but this is merely a pretext. The real reason is Sweden's unwillingness to commit herself to the defence of Finland, which from time immemorial has in fact been the rampart of Scandinavia and of the Western world against the East. Sweden's national poet Tegnér, shortly after 1809, described Finland as "a blood-spattered shield wrested from Sweden's grasp". During the whole of the nineteenth century, Finland continued to act as a shield to Sweden, from the cultural

point of view. Quite recently, in 1918, she has served as an outpost of the Western world against Bolshevism.

It is not only on account of her semi-insular situation that Sweden has been able to live in isolation (which, in her opinion, may be described as 'splendid'); she has owed much of her security to the fact that Finland forms a buffer against the spread of Pan-Slavism. If Russia had been her immediate neighbour, Sweden would have been subjected to considerably stronger political pressure. These facts have often been overlooked by Swedish statesmen, who still pay insufficient attention to them.

Finland has an absolute right to demand that the Scandinavian countries which she defends against aggression from the East should, in turn, back her in the West. She must regard every deviation from this policy on the part of her western neighbours as an action which comes near to treachery.

Finland's strength is of vital importance to the whole of Scandinavia, and since the Swedish population of Finland plays a considerable rôle in the preservation of order and in the cultural development of the country, no part of that population can be allowed to desert its colours. If Finland seeks support or protection for her newly-won freedom, she will not find it in the South but in the West. She needs this support and protection, since her fleet is too small to guard her coasts against the naval forces of Russia. But most of all she desires to look upon her Scandinavian neighbours as her closest friends.

Possible Consequences of the Conflict.

Those who with a light heart threw this apple of discord between Sweden and Finland certainly failed to appreciate the calamities which will arise if Sweden should succeed in acquiring Åland at the expense of Finland. Many Swedish Finlanders who are sincere friends of Sweden and possess a thorough knowledge of the conditions of their own country — a knowledge which most Swedes entirely lack

— are firmly convinced that the consequences would be most unhappy both to Sweden and to Swedish culture abroad. A feeling of bitter hostility would incessantly rankle in the hearts of the Finns, who form the great majority of the Finnish nation, and are a young, strong, virile, excitable and very stubborn people. Finland would be inclined to associate herself with every political anti-Swedish combination which would afford her the possibility of avenging herself and of washing away the offence. This national feeling against the Swedes would be readily turned against Finland's own Swedish-speaking citizens, who, so long as they are desirous of maintaining their Swedish affinities, could not perpetually share the indignation of their Finnish co-citizens. The loss of Aland would therefore involve the most disastrous consequences to the Swedish-speaking population of Finland. Which is the more profitable alternative for Sweden: to win Aland (whose strategical value to a country possessing a weak fleet is somewhat problematical), thereby irretrievably losing the friendship of Finland; or to continue to enjoy the affection of nearly 400,000 Swedes East of the Gulf of Bothnia, together with the friendly regard of the whole Finnish nation? If the Aland question is allowed to die a natural death, everything being left *in statu quo*, no one retaining the hope of stirring up unrest again — then the Alanders a few years hence will acquiesce in the continuance of those conditions in which they have lived from time immemorial. As for Sweden, the whole movement is too artificial and too unnatural to afford grounds for a long-continued enmity against Finland. Sweden's generosity may find a nobler object than the protection of M. Sundblom and his followers; and feelings of friendship may be strengthened between the peoples of those countries which are geographically so intimately bound up with each other that modern geographers refer to them collectively as Fenno-Scandia. If there is any part of the earth where natural conditions and historical development alike have predetermined neighbouring nations to remain friends for all time, then it is the region inhabited by the four small nations of the North.

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